



## **Michigan Department of Human Services Office of Child Support**

# **ELECTRONIC DISBURSEMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT**

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

Beginning in November 2005, the Michigan State Disbursement Unit (MiSDU) is required to disburse child support electronically in three pilot counties. In 2006 the rest of the state will be phased into electronic disbursement of child support. This will provide child support recipients with a safe, convenient and secure method to receive their payments, and the state with a more efficient way to distribute funds.

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

#### **What counties are included in the pilot?**

Marquette County, Muskegon County and Shiawassee County.

#### **Will everyone in these counties be included?**

All cases within these counties will be included in the pilot program except those that are exempt under the law. Individuals in other counties may be included if their case is being handled by the court in one of the pilot counties. Because families may have moved from the pilot counties to other counties, many counties could include individuals that are part of the pilot program.

#### **What does electronic disbursement of child support mean?**

Electronic disbursement of child support means that support payments will no longer be sent by check to customers. Instead, customers will receive their payments either through direct deposit to their personal bank account, or through a U. S. Bank ReliaCard Visa debit card. The customer can choose which option they want.

#### **Are there any exceptions to receiving child support electronically?**

Yes. The law allows some individuals to continue receiving support payments by check. These include individuals with a mental disability, physical disability, or language or literacy barrier that results in a hardship for those individuals in accessing electronic payments; individuals that received two or less payments per year, or if payments are not expected to continue in a 12-month period; and individuals with both home and work addresses that are more than 30 miles from an automated teller machine (ATM) or their financial institution.

Customers can request an exemption by calling toll free, 1-877-4-MI-Debit (1-877-464-3324). All other individuals in the pilot counties must choose between direct deposit or a ReliaCard Visa debit card.

### **How do I make the choice?**

Customers in the pilot counties that are currently receiving their support payment by check will receive a direct deposit request form to complete and return if they want direct deposit to their personal bank account. If they do not return the form, they will automatically receive a U.S. Bank ReliaCard Visa debit card. New customers will receive one check with a request to make a choice between direct deposit and the ReliaCard Visa debit card for future payments.

### **What is the ReliaCard Visa?**

The ReliaCard is a debit card issued by U.S. Bank. Child support payments will be electronically deposited to this card by the state each time they are due.

### **Is it a credit card?**

No. Unlike a credit card, cardholders can only use the funds that have been deposited by the state. Customers cannot deposit additional funds to the card. There are no credit checks or approvals required.

### **How does the ReliaCard work?**

The ReliaCard can be used:

- to make purchases everywhere Visa debit cards are accepted (over 20 million merchants nationwide), including places like grocery stores, gas stations, and restaurants;
- to pay bills, and for online, phone, and mail orders; and
- to get cash from any bank teller that accepts Visa.

The amounts of purchases or cash withdrawals are automatically deducted from the available funds on the card.

### **Is a PIN (Personal Identification Number) needed to use the card?**

Yes & No. The card can be used to make signature-based purchases without a PIN. However, a PIN must be used for cash withdrawals at ATMs (there is a fee for ATM transactions). The cardholder chooses their own PIN by calling U.S. Bank customer service after they receive their card. For security reasons, it is important that the cardholder pick a PIN that only they would know and not share the PIN or the card with anyone.

### **When getting cash, does the cardholder have to go to a U.S. Bank ATM or U.S. Bank branch?**

No. Cash can be obtained without any fees over the counter at any bank or credit union that accepts Visa. The cardholder can also get cash back without any fees on purchases made at 1.2 million Interlink merchants throughout the United States such as grocery and discount stores. *Note: To identify an Interlink merchant, customers can match the Interlink logo on the back of the card to the logo displayed on the merchant's door or at their check out counter.* Cash can also be obtained at any of the 945,000 Visa/Plus branded ATMs throughout the world, but these transactions would include a fee.

### **How does the state deposit money onto the card?**

Anytime payments are due to the recipient, the state electronically deposits funds to the card just like they'd do for a recipient who is having their funds deposited directly into their checking or savings account. This allows funds to be sent quickly, safely and dependably.

### **Does the recipient receive a new card every time a payment is due to them?**

No. All future child support payments will be automatically deposited onto the initial card received. If the card is ever lost or stolen, a new one will be sent for a standard \$5 fee. Subsequent payments will automatically go to the new card along with any remaining available balance from the old card.

### **What does the recipient do after they receive the card?**

After receiving the card in the mail, the recipient must call U.S. Bank customer service to activate it. Although the state can deposit funds on to the card immediately, the card cannot be used until it has been activated. The cardholder also chooses their PIN (personal identification number) at this time. The number to call to activate the card is sent with the card.

### **Does the recipient have to have an existing relationship with U.S. Bank or any other bank?**

No.

### **How do recipients qualify for the card?**

No approval is required. The state is mandating electronic distribution of child support payments. Therefore, unless the recipient signs up for direct deposit, they will receive the ReliaCard automatically.

### **Who can the cardholder contact if they have questions about their card?**

For questions regarding support payments, such as most recent support amounts deposited, the cardholder should contact the 24-hour case information [access line](#). For all other questions about the card, U.S. Bank customer service is available all day and night, every day of the year toll free. This number is listed on the back of their card.

### **How do cardholders check their available balance?**

Cardholders can obtain their current available balance in three ways:

- View their account online free of charge at: [www.reliacard.com](http://www.reliacard.com).
- Call the toll-free customer service number on the back of their card
- Perform a balance inquiry at an ATM (no fees are charged by U.S. Bank nor most ATM owner/operators. If an ATM owner/operator does charge a fee for a balance inquiry, the customer will be informed so they can make a decision if they would like to proceed with the inquiry.)

### **What happens if the card is lost or stolen?**

Cardholders must call the toll-free customer service number on their monthly statement to report a lost or stolen card (the number is also listed on the card carrier meant to be retained for customer records, and the back of the card). A new card will be issued (for a \$5 fee) and any remaining balance will be transferred to the new card. The cardholder will not be responsible

for any fraudulent activity that occurs on their card provided they report the card missing in a timely manner, and have not shared their card or PIN number with anyone.

### **Is a cardholder able to add funds to their card in addition to what the state puts on it?**

No, only the state can deposit funds to the card.

### **Can a cardholder request a second card for another individual such as a family member?**

No, only the recipient to whom the state is issuing payments will receive a card.

### **Can the card be used by someone other than the person whose name is on it?**

No, for security reasons, cardholders should never share their PIN or allow anyone else to use their card.

### **What happens if a cardholder no longer receives payments from the state, or has decided to switch to have their payments directly deposited into a checking or savings account?**

The cardholder can continue to use their card until any remaining balance has been used.

### **Are there any fees associated with this card?**

Yes, there are standard fees associated with the debit card; however, all money on the card can be accessed without incurring any fees as indicated in previous questions. All fee amounts are provided with the card.

### **Can the ReliaCard be overdrawn?**

Normally the cardholder can only use up to the amount of funds available to them. However, under certain circumstances, such as pay-at-the-pump gas dispensers or restaurants in which a tip is added to the bill, the card can become overdrawn. If the card is overdrawn, the cardholder is subject to an over limit fee of \$20.00. It is therefore important for cardholders to track their balances carefully in order to avoid an overdraft situation. *Note: **As a one time courtesy**, U.S. Bank will reverse this fee provided that the cardholder calls U.S. Bank customer service to discuss how they became overdrawn.*

### **Does the cardholder receive a monthly paper statement in the mail?**

Yes. They can also view their current transaction history and past statements on-line at [www.reliacard.com](http://www.reliacard.com).

**When the card is sent in the mail, what does the envelope look like?**

For security reasons, the cards are mailed in plain white envelopes with an address window, which allow the recipient's name and address to show through.

**What information or instructions come with the card?**

The card comes with the following:

- Instructions on how to activate the card
- Cardmember agreement disclosing fees and all other terms and conditions of use
- Welcome brochure detailing where and how the card can be used
- U.S. Bank privacy pledge
- Visa Purchase Security guide to benefits

**What services does the U.S. Bank 24-hour customer service provide and are there any fees for the service?**

The following can be done through the 24-hour account information voice response system (VRS) free of charge:

- Activate the card
- Choose/Change PIN (Personal Identification Number)
- Balance inquiry
- Review recent transaction history, including deposits

There is one free call per month to a customer service representative. Additional calls are \$3.00 per call. Customer service representatives provide the following services:

- Report card lost/stolen/not received
- Issue new card
- Resolve disputed transaction
- Update account information (address, phone number, etc.)
- Transfer money from the card to checking/savings account (there is a \$15 fee for an account transfer)

**Can the cardholder view their account on-line?**

Yes, at [www.reliacard.com](http://www.reliacard.com). The following functions can be performed on-line:

- PIN Change
- Balance inquiry
- View current month's transactions
- View previous statements for last 12 months

**Can the state view or track individual cardholder transaction activity?**

No. For privacy reasons, U.S. Bank does not share card account numbers or transaction details with the state. However, for reconciliation purposes, the state does have access to the amount and date of deposits they made to individual cards.